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REPORT ON PERSONNEL SUBJECTS DISCUSSED AT THE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
MANAGEMENT MEETING, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS -- May 21 to 25, 1956

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND INCENTIVES

Supervisory Development

Two sessions were devoted to this topic during the meeting. The first one was held Monday afternoon, May 21, with the personnel staff, Area Administrative Division Directors and Mr. Herrell present. Discussion concerned the value and increase in use of correspondence courses, problems in providing training in assembled meetings during working hours, and what types of supervisors most need this kind of training (i.e., those with considerable experience vs. those just now assuming supervisory positions). There was rather general agreement that an effort should be made by the Washington staff to "sell" top management people at the Washington level on the need for supervisory training before too much could be accomplished in the field. It was brought out that Washington Branch Chiefs are often closer to the field officers in charge than are the Washington Division Directors, and that the former carry considerable weight in determining what field people should or should not have in the way of training.

A panel discussion of supervisory development took place early Wednesday afternoon, May 23, when the Administrator was in attendance. The panel consisted of Messrs. S. R. Newell, Paul Auge, Maurice Ward and Jack Hamblin, with Mr. W. C. Laxton serving as moderator. An attempt was made by this panel to define what was meant by "supervisory development," "executive development," "management development," etc., and to outline the tremendous amount of importance presently being attached to and the work being done in this field by industry and the armed forces. Several 4 to 8 week courses in management development were briefly described, including the Harvard Business School Summer Sessions, the American Management Association Course, the Case Institute Course in Leadership and others. It was brought out that such courses carry high tuitions, as well as other expenses which in the case of AMS there is no authority to pay for out of appropriated funds. The Administrator remarked that we should identify the key people we want to train and develop an appropriate training program of our own for them.

As a result of the two highly beneficial sessions devoted to supervisory development, the Personnel Division has made the development of such a program a priority goal for fiscal year 1957. The Employee Development Staff will commence work to that end immediately. Early meetings are planned with the Management Advisory Committee of Program Division Directors to discuss our approach.

Administrative Clerical Meetings

A summary report, prepared in Washington by George Young, was distributed and discussed briefly at the conference on Wednesday morning, May 23. Brief reports were made by the three Area Directors as to their impressions of the effectiveness of these meetings. Mr. Roberts commented on the B&F sections of the meeting, Mr. Auge on the Administrative Services sections, and Mr. Ward on the Personnel sections. While there appeared to be justifiable reasons for the non-participation by some AM offices at these meetings (i.e., obligation records not being maintained, etc.), it was noted that a few offices were not represented which would have benefited

by having someone in attendance. To the extent possible, these offices are to be visited in the near future by representatives of the AAD's so that "on the spot" training may be provided. A general improvement in the financial reports, and an increase in correspondence regarding proper recording of various items was noted.

Incentive Awards

The personnel group discussed operating problems relating to the Incentive Awards program Tuesday morning, May 22, with the Area Directors present. Then on Wednesday morning, May 23, following the presentation of 20 and 30 year length-of-service awards to thirteen management people by the Administrator, several statistical tables were distributed and we discussed progress in the program to date.

These discussions resulted in recommendations for two changes in the program.

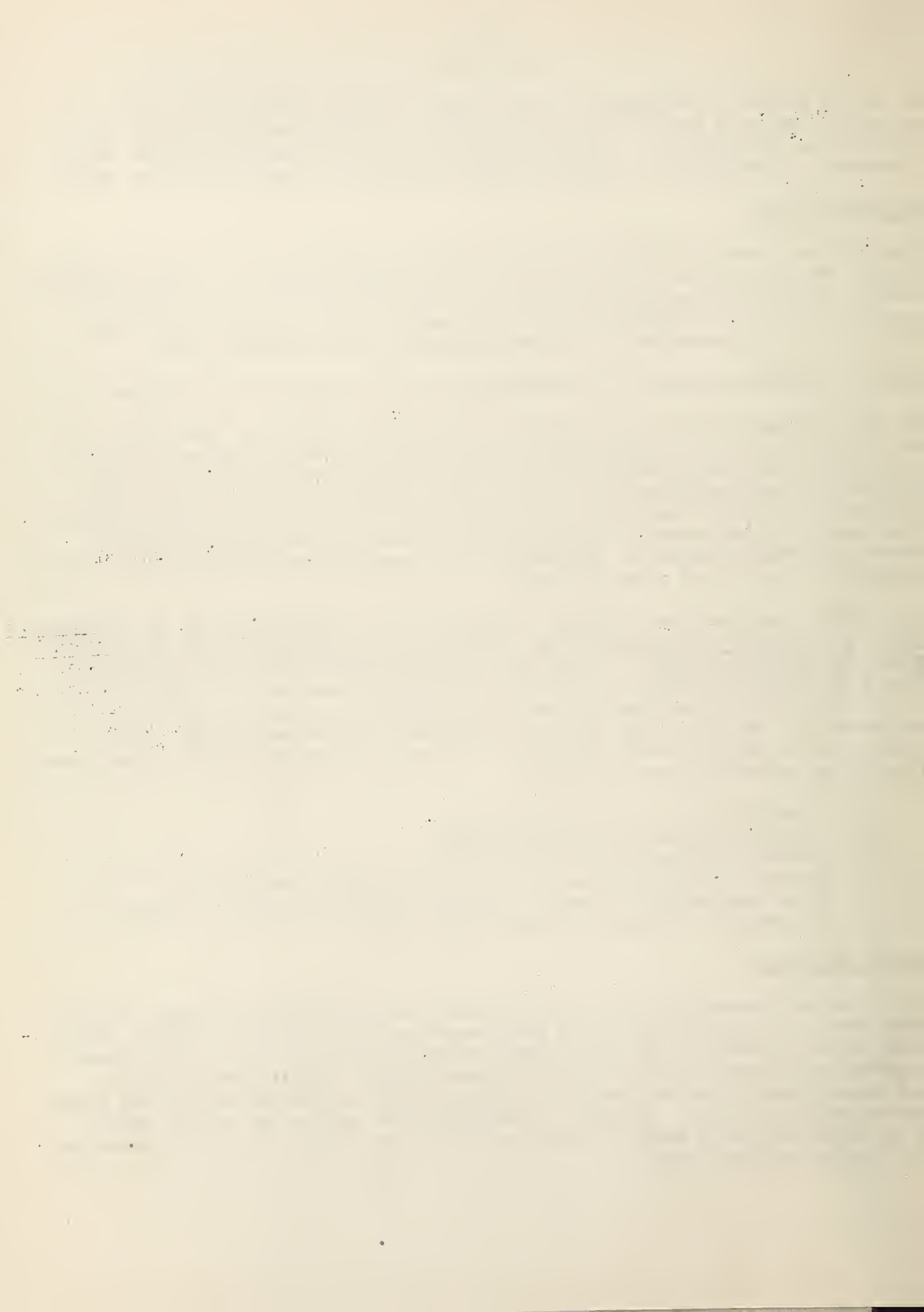
The first change involves the routing of vouchers for payment of cash awards. It was decided that in the future vouchers would be sent from the Employee Development, Health and Incentives Branch to the Division concerned rather than to the appropriate Area Administrative Division. The respective Divisions would then send vouchers to the Area Administrative Division with instructions regarding the presentation of the award. This should avoid confusion, delay in delivery of checks, premature release of information to the employee through change slips or ledger sheets and other minor problems.

The second change involves a change of emphasis or the stepping up of the Suggestive phase of the Incentive Awards program. This was adopted as one of the personnel goals for fiscal year 1957. It was agreed that two improvements were necessary if this goal was to be accomplished, (1) the more prompt handling of suggestions, and (2) better methods of getting information regarding the program to rank and file employees. We agreed to take appropriate action to secure more prompt action on suggestions by the respective Divisions. The group recommended the following steps for getting information down the line:

1. A periodic Incentive Awards bulletin.
2. A cartoon brochure on the AMS program.
3. Periodic distribution of flyers, posters, etc., by Area Administrative Divisions with particular attention to pay check inserts.
4. It was also agreed to improve method of keeping suggesters informed of the progress or status of their suggestions.

Safety and Health

This item was discussed in a general personnel session Thursday afternoon, May 24. There were two important results of the discussion in this session. First, statistical tables relating to the AMS accident and injury experience were distributed together with a recommended method of accident coding. Significant individual and summary statistical analyses which could be made through the use of this coding system were pointed out. Secondly, a discussion was held on the various safety promotional activities carried on by each of the Area Administrative Divisions and the relative merits of each.



With respect to the accident coding, it was generally agreed that the information was of high value to the Area Administrative Divisions but that the area use would be limited to the analysis of individual cases. Because of the size of the sample, statistical analyses would be made at the Washington level.

It was agreed that we would appraise the value of the promotional projects or techniques used by any one area and if found advantageous, we would establish them on a National basis. Otherwise, such methods would be discontinued by the originating area. It was brought out that the Directors of the Area Administrative Divisions plan to rotate the Chairmanship of the Accident Boards of Review.

EMPLOYMENT

Details of Employees

The Civil Service Commission requires that we record in the employee's folder any detail that extends over one month. There is some confusion as to what actually constitutes a detail. We have submitted questions to the Office of Personnel and plan to amend AMS Instruction No. 330-1 as necessary, depending upon the answers we get.

Recruitment - Examination

We will continue to make full use of the Federal Service Entrance Examination including publicity and contacts with various colleges. The group also agreed that we should expand the student trainee program into the inspection and grading activities. We will also attempt to develop and have issued other examinations as needed in the Service. We will continue to exchange recruitment information between the various personnel offices.

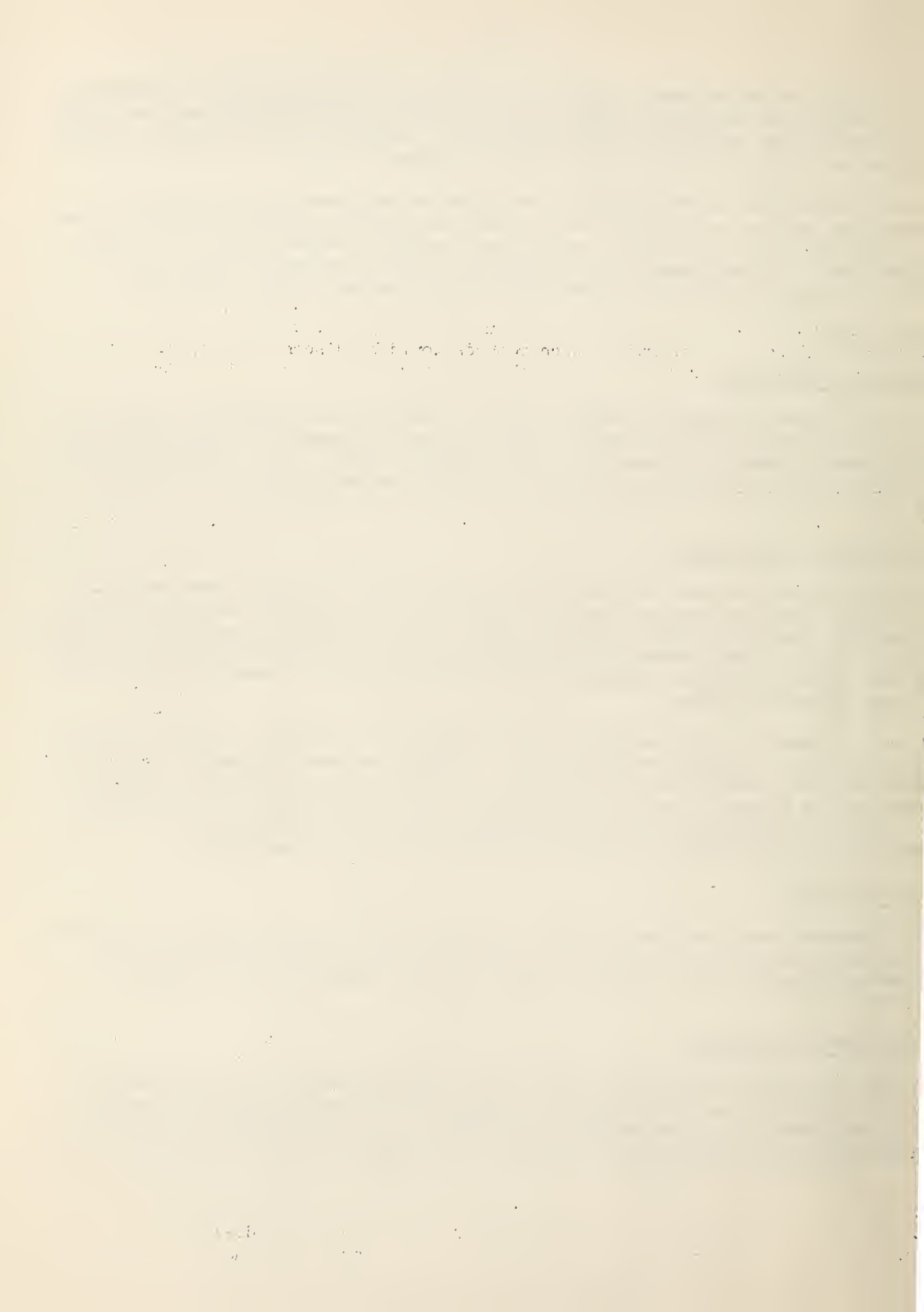
We are now working on a distinctive leaflet describing AMS jobs. We hope to distribute this to colleges and universities and other sources of possible recruitment about the time school starts in the fall. (We are scheduling meetings with the Divisions to attempt to pin down recruitment needs and to discuss future examination plans. Any information developed which will be of interest to the Area Administrative Divisions will be forwarded after the meetings are completed.)

Career Program

The Personnel group was given a draft of our proposed career development program. There appeared to be some skepticism about some of its provisions and the Area Personnel Branches were requested to give us their comments on this issuance in writing.

Applicant Supply System

We have been criticised by the last two Civil Service inspections on the way we maintain applications. We now have a draft of an instruction that we think will meet the Commission's requirements. The draft is now being studied by the Area Personnel Branches and we hope to issue it in final form in the near future.



Hours of Work and Tours of Duty

We had quite a discussion on this subject. The various programs of AMS present some unique situations as far as hours of work and tours of duty are concerned. One of our long-time objectives is to get legislation that will permit us to do what we almost have to to accomplish our mission. In the meantime, we will try to develop an instruction that will be of some help to the field.

Qualification Standards

It was agreed that the Personnel Division wants and needs the collaboration of the Area Personnel Branches in the development of qualification standards and this practice will be followed in the future. We are having some little difficulty in applying qualification standards for excepted appointments. If our hopes of bringing the inspection and grading jobs into competitive service are realized, we should overcome this difficulty.

Letter of Authority Appointment

The group agreed that letter of authority appointments were necessary to the program operations of the Agricultural Marketing Service. There was a general feeling, however, that not all such appointments were complying with the spirit and the letter of the L/A regulations. The two main fears were that some L/A appointments were being made outside of emergency conditions, and that the pay was not in accordance with the Classification Act requirements or going wage rates, as the case might be. It was decided to amend the L/A instruction and specifically point out that the Area Personnel Branches have the authority to require changes in grade or pay levels when the job is obviously in the wrong pay bracket. We will also try to clarify and bring to the attention of the program people holding station letters the conditions under which L/A appointments can properly be made.

It was agreed to get jobs wherever possible for letter of authorization employment put in the standard position ("SJ") category. Some are not now in the SJ system but are so-called guide or AMS standard position descriptions.

It was decided that it would be the policy of AMS for the appropriate personnel office to enforce proper salary and wages in L/A employment and to take such actions as are necessary in those cases where the operating official pays too much or too little in accordance with the Classification Act or prevailing rate, whichever the case may be.

It was agreed that where an SJ numbered job is used in L/A employment, only the SJ number, title, schedule, series, and grade be shown on the AMS-19, instead of a job description. A copy of the job description will be provided the employee and his record only.

It was also agreed that in cases where time was sufficient, a job would be established or wage rate determination made, prior to the time of employment. Our discussion seemed to show that this would be possible in over 90% of the actions taken.

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of a solution of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the system has a solution for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied. In this case the solution is unique and is given by the formula

$$x = \frac{1}{\alpha + \beta} \left(\alpha x_1 + \beta x_2 \right)$$

where x_1 and x_2 are the solutions of the system of equations (1) for $\alpha = 1$ and $\beta = 0$ and for $\alpha = 0$ and $\beta = 1$ respectively.

Cooperative Employment

We have made considerable progress in the last two years in having included in the cooperative document specific language that will determine the pay, retirement, leave, insurance, etc., status of cooperative employees. Through diligent effort we can probably get on top of this problem within the next year or so.

Headquarters of Employees

This is quite a problem in AMS because we have so many programs that require frequent changes in headquarters, the establishment of travel headquarters, administrative headquarters, etc. The Assistant Administrator for Management appointed a committee consisting of George Borders, Personnel Division, Syd Skoglund, Administrative Services Division, and Jim Huey, Budget and Finance Division, to study this situation and come up with recommendations of what we should do.

CLASSIFICATION AND ORGANIZATION

Classification Status Report

Each of the Areas and the Washington Branch made reports on the status of job classification in their respective jurisdictions. In general, our job descriptions are about 96% current. We will meet our 25% desk audit requirement under the Whitten Amendment. There did not seem to be an abnormal backlog of work in any office.

Development and Use of Standard Job Descriptions

It was agreed that we should use standard job descriptions in all cases where they are applicable in order to save the time of program people. We have asked the Areas to give us their recommendations by June 30 of this year.

Class Specification Program

As of June 4, Mr. Harold Grambs was added to the staff of the Personnel Division for the specific purpose of getting on top of our standards work. We are already working on about eight such standards covering most of our inspection, grading, and classing work. We also have several studies under way on market news and one on head clerks. The establishment of standards for head clerks will probably be delayed until several of the program divisions can take some action in realigning flow of work, delegations of authority, and work assignments in their field offices. Several of the program divisions are actively working on this project at the current time.

Uniform Class Records

All of the personnel offices with one exception are following a plan that meets the Civil Service Commission requirements as provided in its regulation S-812. Steps are being taken to correct this one situation. A number of specific questions were raised regarding these records and specific answers were given. Little, if any, trouble is expected in this area.

Disciplinary Cases

It was agreed that the Personnel Division would consult with the Area Personnel Branches on all disciplinary cases arising in the respective areas before recommending penalty action to the Office of Personnel. Investigative reports would not be circulated. Consultation will normally be by telephone.

Fair Employment Policy

At the general session on Wednesday, May 23, the provisions of E.O. 10590 were discussed and officials of the Department responsible for the administration of the program were identified.

The following major goals were set for the coming fiscal year:

1. Completion of additional class specifications and development of more standard jobs.
2. Bringing the inspection and grading activities into the competitive service involving the development of appropriate Civil Service examinations.
3. Installation of a workable Career Program in AMS.
4. Expansion of the Student Trainee Program to other AMS positions.
5. Development and distribution of remaining personnel instructions.
6. A step-up in the Employee Suggestion Program.
7. Some positive supervisory development training.
8. Explore possibility of legislation more applicable to inspection and grading regarding hours of duty, overtime-travel.



